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WALTER M. DICKIE, M.D., Director

Weekly Bulletin



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GUY P. JONES
EDITOR

Psittacosis Arouses Interest

The appearance of cases of psittacosis, "parrot fever," in human beings upon the Atlantic seaboard and the widespread publicity that has been given to these cases has aroused considerable interest in this unusual disease among residents of the Pacific coast. The appearance of possible cases in southern California during the past two weeks has added greatly to this interest. At the time that this report is written, definite evidence based upon laboratory findings has not been obtained for cases in California that have been suspected as psittacosis. The symptoms of this disease are often confusing and without laboratory confirmation it is not always possible to make an exact diagnosis. The three suspected cases that have occurred during the past two weeks have been investigated by state and local health officers. All cases of illness in persons who may have been in contact with sick parrots are under investigation but, so far, it is not possible to state that pronounced cases of psittacosis have actually occurred in California.

It may be of interest to state that this disease was probably first recognized as long ago as 1879. It is an acute infectious disease which occurs chiefly in house epidemics and it is characterized by symptoms which resemble those of typhoid fever, with a superimposed pneumonia. The most extensive outbreak of this disease in history occurred in Paris in December of 1891, when 500 parrots were purchased in Buenos Ayres and shipped to France. During the voyage large numbers of the birds became sick and

died, only 200 surviving. Shortly after they reached Paris, 40 known cases of psittacosis occurred, with 16 deaths, and for several years following minor outbreaks of this disease occurred. Cases were reported in Italy in 1894 and a few cases have been seen in England and in the United States. Three cases of the disease were reported in New Hampshire in 1904. These were not proved bacteriologically, but the occurrence of characteristic symptoms, coincidental with the arrival of sick parrots, was thought to be sufficient for the establishment of the diagnosis. The causative bacillus may be isolated from the blood and organs of parrots which may be affected with the disease, but instances of its isolation in man are extremely rare. Some authorities believe that epidemics of psittacosis are nothing more than cases of pneumonia in which the parrot played a role in the transmission of the disease.

APPLICATION FOR SEWAGE DISPOSAL PERMIT PENDING

The following application for sewage disposal permit is pending before the State Board of Public Health, final action to be taken at the next meeting of the board to be held in room 335 State Building, Civic Center, San Francisco, on February 8, 1930:

NATIONAL CITY—Application for permit to construct additional treatment works and dispose of settled sewage into channels of San Diego Bay.

FEWER CASES OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE IN 1929

There were 38,000 fewer cases of communicable disease reported in California in 1929 than were reported during the year 1928. The total number of such cases reported in 1929 was 106,851 and the total number of such cases reported in 1928 was 144,972. Marked declines are noted in the prevalence of diphtheria, influenza and typhoid fever. There were increased prevalences noted in 1929 for scarlet fever, smallpox, mumps and bacillary dysentery.

The decline in diphtheria from 4741 cases in 1928 to 3008 cases in 1929 is regarded by public health officials as a matter of considerable significance. While this decrease was influenced, no doubt, by certain biological factors over which there is no control, it is certain that the more extensive immunization of children against this disease has played an important part in bringing about the great reduction in its prevalence. If all children were immunized against diphtheria in infancy it is possible that this great scourge of childhood might be practically eliminated.

Typhoid fever fell from 689 cases reported in 1928 to 607 cases reported in 1929. Never before were so few typhoid cases reported during any one year in California. This disease, the control of which lies chiefly in the improvement of environmental conditions, has been made a disease of such rare occurrence in California that it may be said truthfully that a very large number of physicians never see a case of it. The control of typhoid fever represents one of the great triumphs of preventive medicine and the successful warfare that has been waged against this disease may be credited to the provision of pure water supplies; the proper handling of foodstuffs; the immunization of large numbers of individuals and the development of better methods of personal hygiene in vast numbers of residents within the state. If milk supplies were controlled properly greater reductions might be made in the prevalence of this disease. Nearly all outbreaks of typhoid fever that occur at the present time may be traced to infected milk.

The increase in bacillary dysentery from 86 cases reported in 1928 to 792 reported in 1929 is due to explosive outbreaks which occurred in institutions. This disease, which flares up explosively and dies down with equal rapidity, is amenable to the same methods of control that are applied to typhoid fever. The speed with which it develops makes it very difficult to apply control measures quickly enough to be effective. It is believed that most cases of bacillary dysentery are due to the use of foods which have become infected by cases or carriers of this disease.

Smallpox increased from 1176 cases reported in 1928 to 2481 reported in 1929. The control of this disease lies entirely in the successful vaccination of individuals against it. All persons who have not been successfully vaccinated against smallpox are liable to contract this disease. According to the prevailing policy, responsibility for immunization against smallpox rests upon the individual as an individual. Whenever an outbreak of the disease occurs within the state, free vaccination is offered to all individuals who may desire it. It is regarded generally, however, that the liability to contract smallpox rests upon the choice of the individual as to whether he desires to be vaccinated or not. The responsibility for the vaccination of children, therefore, rests largely upon the parents, although vaccination is offered extensively in health centers, child health conferences and as a routine measure in the conduct of many health departments.

The increase in the prevalence of scarlet fever from 7540 cases reported in 1928 to 14,848 cases reported in 1929 is not a matter of particular significance. The increase is regarded as seasonal, conforming to the biological factors which control the cycles in which this disease appears. Fortunately, most cases of scarlet fever are mild and the fatality rate is low. The after effects and the complications that may occur with scarlet fever are matters of great importance, however, and young children should always be safeguarded against contact with cases of this disease.

The 1928 morbidity total was considerably increased by a short outbreak of influenza which occurred in the early part of the year, when 49,000 cases were reported. There were but 5797 cases reported in 1929. It may be stated here that a slight rise in the prevalence of this disease may be expected during February and March. It is not anticipated that this outbreak will assume extensive proportions, but the forecast is made here in order that all individuals may be forewarned and that they may pay close heed to all matters pertaining to personal hygiene, with special reference to the avoidance of any of the common indiscretions which lead commonly to the contraction of colds. During the winter season it is always desirable that the body be kept warm; that indiscretions in diet be avoided, and that all of the common precautions relative to the maintenance of physical efficiency be taken.

The extraordinary prosperity which has been witnessed in the United States is, in large measure, the result of the control which has been exercised over disease. No greater service can be rendered to insure the general peace and prosperity than to improve the world's health.—*Dr. Dublin.*

PLANS FOR PRESCHOOL HEALTH CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCED

The Bureau of Child Hygiene of the State Department of Public Health is organizing its annual campaign for the physical examinations of children who will enter school for the first time next fall. This campaign is undertaken together with the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, and it will be state-wide in scope.

In the past two years nearly 30,000 California children have received these physical examinations before entrance upon the public schools. It is anticipated that at least 25,000 children of preschool age will receive physical examinations in the campaign which is now under way.

President Hoover, who has always been an active sponsor of all activities that relate to the development of child welfare, has always shown a particular interest in the health of children who are of preschool age. The President's Conference on Child Welfare, which was recently called, placed strong emphasis upon the need for adequate health in young children for the accomplishment of activities of childhood which are yearly becoming more intricate and which involve greater effort.

It is conceded, generally, that children of the present age must engage in far more arduous activities because of the increasingly complex nature of our social life. There is far greater need today for children to be physically fit for school life than there has ever been before. In order to be successful in school, an entering child must have a strong physique; he must not tire easily; he must not be nervous; he must be able to see and hear well; he must possess all sound attributes for good general health. It is not fair to the child, nor to the educational system to permit entrants upon the schools to lack in any of the requirements that are essential for physical fitness.

The campaign now being undertaken by the Bureau of Child Hygiene and the California Congress of Parents and Teachers will provide physical examinations for young children at no cost to the parents. Full information concerning the times and places at which these examinations will be given may be obtained from local health officers and public health nurses in nearly every county of the state.

Physicians should steep themselves in the humanities. The sort of culture they need is best obtained by familiarity with poets, philosophers, biographers, musicians, and art. I am convinced that the medical student who knows the great classics of the past is better equipped to practice medicine than he who has medical textbooks at his finger tips. The welfare of the soul is enhanced by culture.—*Dr. Joseph Collins.*

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The survey of the cities and counties of southern California shows that they spent last year almost two and one-half million dollars in the promotion of public health activities. This survey includes all of the incorporated cities and the counties of Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Orange, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. There are 1265 employees of public health departments in these cities and counties. Among these are 383 physicians, 292 public health nurses, 203 sanitary inspectors, 161 laboratory workers, 150 clerks and 54 food inspectors.

A million dollars was spent last year by these cities and counties in the direct control of the communicable diseases. Nearly \$300,000 was spent in the promotion of sanitation and an equal amount was spent in the maintenance of public health nursing activities. The bulk of the public health program carried on in the southern part of the state relates to the promotion of child health and to the provision of safeguards for the prevention of communicable diseases.

Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oftentimes no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed and squared and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.—*Cowper.*

MORBIDITY*

Diphtheria.

93 cases of diphtheria have been reported, as follows: Alameda County 2, Albany 1, Berkeley 1, Oakland 4, Butte County 2, Imperial County 5, El Centro 2, Kings County 1, Los Angeles County 5, Alhambra 1, Azusa 1, Beverly Hills 1, Burbank 1, Glendale 1, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 31, Montebello 4, Pasadena 2, Santa Monica 1, Orange County 1, Orange 4, Santa Ana 1, Tustin, 3, Hollister 1, Rialto 1, San Diego County 1, San Francisco 6, Lodi 1, Santa Clara County 1, San Jose 2, Porterville 2, Ventura 2.

Scarlet Fever.

278 cases of scarlet fever have been reported, as follows: Alameda 1, Albany 2, Berkeley 13, Oakland 11, Colusa County 3, Pittsburg 1, Del Norte County 1, Fresno County 22, Fresno 6, Reedley 3, Willows 3, Humboldt County 5, Eureka 5, Ferndale 1, Fortuna 1, Imperial County 1, Bakersfield 1, Los Angeles County 6, El Segundo 1, Glendale 7, Huntington Park 2, Long Beach 4, Los Angeles 58, Montebello 5, Santa Monica 3, Sierra Madre 1, South Gate 1, Monterey Park 1, Maywood 1, Bell 2, Madera County 1, Nevada County 2, Orange County 1, Brea 2, Huntington Beach 4, Santa Ana 2, Plumas County 1, Riverside 1, Sacramento County 3, Sacramento 11, Colton 2.

*From reports received on January 20th and 21st for week ending January 18th.

San Diego County 4, San Diego 2, San Francisco 26, San Joaquin County 6, Lodi 3, Manteca 2, Stockton 2, Tracy 2, Arroyo Grande 1, San Mateo County 1, Daly City 1, Menlo Park 1, Santa Clara County 1, Gilroy 1, Palo Alto 1, San Jose 1, Santa Clara 1, Watsonville 1, Mt. Shasta 1, Sonoma County 2, Stanislaus County 2, Turlock 1, Tehama County 1, Red Bluff 5, Tulare County 1, Porterville 1, Yolo County 3, Woodland 1, Marysville 1.

Measles.

490 cases of measles have been reported, as follows: Alameda 36, Albany 2, Berkeley 4, Oakland 32, Contra Costa County 17, Pittsburg 1, Richmond 2, Fresno County 2, Eureka 1, Imperial County 2, Imperial 1, Bakersfield 1, Los Angeles County 44, Glendale 1, Long Beach 4, Los Angeles 27, Pasadena 2, Pomona 1, Merced County 1, Brea 1, Fullerton 1, Santa Ana 1, Sacramento County 5, Sacramento 4, San Diego County 1, San Francisco 251, San Joaquin 5, Lodi 1, Stockton 8, San Luis Obispo 1, San Mateo County 2, Burlingame 1, Santa Clara County 1, Palo Alto 1, San Jose 15, Santa Clara 3, Sunnyvale 1, Rio Vista 1, Sonoma County 1, Modesto 1, Davis 2, Marysville 1.

Smallpox.

157 cases of smallpox have been reported, as follows: Alameda 7, Berkeley 1, Oakland 5, Imperial County 11, Calxico 1, El Centro 15, Holtville 1, Imperial 5, Los Angeles County 2, Culver City 2, Huntington Park 1, Los Angeles 11, Pasadena 2, Torrance 9, Maywood 20, Marin County 1, Grass Valley 1, Roseville 2, Plumas County 1, Riverside County 1, Riverside 1, Sacramento 4, Redlands 25, San Diego 1, San Francisco 3, Stockton 13, Santa Clara 5, Benicia 3, Stanislaus County 1, Turlock 2.

Typhoid Fever.

3 cases of typhoid fever have been reported, as follows: Los Angeles 1, Merced County 1, San Francisco 1.

Whooping Cough.

114 cases of whooping cough have been reported, as follows: Berkeley 1, Oakland 2, Gridley 4, Pittsburg 1, Richmond 1, El Centro 1, Kings County 1, Lemoore 1, Los Angeles County 4, Glendale 2, Huntington Park 2, Long Beach 12, Los Angeles 15, Pasadena 2, Bell 2, Orange 4, Fullerton 2, Huntington Beach 2, Santa Ana 21, Seal Beach 1, Riverside County 2, San Diego 9, San Francisco 1, Santa Clara County 2, Solano County 2, Tehama County 4, Tulare County 2, Ventura 8, Yolo County 3.

Meningitis (Epidemic).

18 cases of epidemic meningitis have been reported, as follows: Imperial County 6, Los Angeles County 1, Huntington Park 1, Santa Monica 1, Orange County 1, San Diego 1, San Joaquin County 2, Stockton 4, San Jose 1.

Leprosy.

Yolo County reported one case of leprosy.

Poliomyelitis.

2 cases of poliomyelitis have been reported, as follows: El Centro 1, Sacramento 1.

Trichinosis.

4 cases of trichinosis have been reported, as follows: Alameda 2, Berkeley 1, Oakland 1.

Jaundice (Epidemic).

Whittier reported one case of epidemic jaundice.

Undulant Fever.

2 cases of undulant fever have been reported, as follows: Ontario 1, Davis 1.

Tularemia.

Imperial County reported one case of tularemia.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORTS

Disease	1929-1930				1928-1929			
	Week ending			Reports for week ending Jan. 18 received by Jan. 21	Week ending			Reports for week ending Jan. 19 received by Jan. 22
	Dec. 28	Jan. 4	Jan. 11		Dec. 29	Jan. 5	Jan. 12	
Chickenpox	252	305	513	419	110	185	327	279
Coccidioidal Granuloma	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Diphtheria	83	91	70	93	58	54	65	73
Dysentery (Amoebic)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Dysentery (Bacillary)	8	0	2	0	0	1	0	1
Encephalitis (Epidemic)	1	1	2	0	2	1	3	4
Erysipelas	16	17	23	25	11	18	15	19
Food Poisoning	0	0	9	0	0	0	1	5
German Measles	11	11	21	17	7	9	15	12
Gonococcus Infection	59	98	138	98	70	99	126	108
Influenza	41	54	76	110	1,590	1,365	987	455
Jaundice (Epidemic)	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
Leprosy	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Malaria	1	1	1	0	2	0	5	2
Measles	239	190	475	490	19	22	25	32
Meningitis (Epidemic)	17	12	12	18	15	10	16	4
Mumps	240	347	456	563	98	157	275	219
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Paratyphoid Fever	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pellagra	3	0	2	0	0	3	1	1
Pneumonia (Lobar)	65	98	116	98	93	94	78	87
Poliomyelitis	1	2	3	2	2	1	3	1
Rabies (Animal)	9	14	8	12	51	13	12	9
Scarlet Fever	234	280	325	278	151	195	275	378
Smallpox	98	56	83	157	21	13	39	41
Syphilis	101	107	179	129	89	128	190	127
Tetanus	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1
Trachoma	4	1	2	4	1	0	1	0
Trichinosis	20	17	33	4	0	0	0	0
Tularemia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Tuberculosis	151	187	223	174	145	186	227	250
Typhoid Fever	7	4	7	3	12	6	2	3
Undulant Fever	2	4	1	2	1	1	0	0
Whooping Cough	50	73	134	114	71	154	207	228
Totals	1,713	1,972	2,917	2,816	2,617	2,717	2,899	2,343



Smallpox almost doubled in its prevalence over the preceding week.



Measles and mumps show continued increases.



Apparently epidemic meningitis is still something to worry about.



Influenza is showing an increase each week.

